

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Section 4 examines the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project and Project Alternatives. This section includes analyses of these environmental issue areas:

- 4.1 System Safety and Reliability;
- 4.2 Water and Sediment Quality;
- 4.3 Biological Resources;
- 4.4 Air Quality;
- 4.5 Aesthetics;
- 4.6 Geological Resources;
- 4.7 Land Use, Planning, and Recreation;
- 4.8 Noise;
- 4.9 Energy; and
- 4.10 Cultural Resources.

Each environmental issue area analyzed in this document provides background information and describes the environmental setting (baseline conditions) to help the reader understand the underlying conditions against which an impact would be evaluated. In addition, each section describes how an impact on those underlying conditions is determined “significant” or “less than significant.” Finally, the individual sections recommend mitigation measures (MM) to reduce significant impacts. Throughout Section 4, both significant impacts and corresponding MM are identified with a bold letter-number designation (e.g., Impact **BIO-1** and **MM BIO-1**.)

1 Based on an initial review and analysis, the proposed Project would likely have a less
2 than significant impact, or no impact, on these environmental issue areas:

- 3 • Population and Housing. The Project would not require a change in the number
4 of employees nor result in the construction or modification of new or existing
5 facilities. The Project would not induce substantial population growth in the area
6 nor displace substantial numbers of people or housing units.
- 7 • Utilities and Service Systems. The Project would not result in additional demand
8 for water, wastewater treatment, or solid waste disposal services in excess of
9 current capacities.

10 **ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

11 **ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE**

12 The analysis of each issue area begins with an examination of the existing physical
13 setting (baseline conditions as determined pursuant to Section 15125(a) of the
14 California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] Guidelines) that may be affected by the
15 proposed Project. The effects of the proposed Project are defined as changes to the
16 environmental setting attributable to project components or operation.

17 **SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

18 Significance criteria are identified for each environmental issue area. The significance
19 criteria serve as benchmarks for determining if a component action will result in a
20 significant adverse environmental impact when evaluated against the baseline.
21 According to Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines, a significant effect on the
22 environment means “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of
23 the physical conditions within the area affected by the project.”

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Impacts are classified as:

- **Class I** (significant adverse impact that remains significant after mitigation);
- **Class II** (significant adverse impact that can be eliminated or reduced below an issue's significance criteria);
- **Class III** (adverse impact that does not meet or exceed an issue's significance criteria); or
- **Class IV** (beneficial impact).

A determination will be made, based on the analysis of any impact within each affected environmental issue area and compliance with any recommended mitigation measure(s), of the level of impact remaining in comparison to the pertinent significance criteria. If the impact remains significant, at or above the significance criteria, it is deemed to be Class I. If a "significant adverse impact" is reduced, based on compliance with mitigation, to a level below the pertinent significance criteria, it is determined to no longer have a significant effect on the environment, i.e., to be "less than significant" (Class II). If an action creates an adverse impact above the baseline condition, but such impact does not meet or exceed the pertinent significance criteria, it is determined to be adverse, but less than significant (Class III). An action that provides an improvement to an environmental issue area in comparison to the baseline information is recognized as a beneficial impact (Class IV).

FORMULATION OF MITIGATION MEASURES AND MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

When significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures are formulated to eliminate or reduce the intensity of the impacts and focus on the protection of sensitive resources. The effectiveness of a mitigation measure is subsequently determined by evaluating the impact remaining after its application. Those impacts meeting or exceeding the impact significance criteria after mitigation are considered residual impacts that remain significant (Class I). Implementation of more than one mitigation measure may be needed to reduce an impact below a level of significance. The mitigation measures recommended in this document are identified in the impact sections and presented in a Mitigation Monitoring Program, provided in Section 7.0.

1 If any mitigation measures are incorporated as part of a project's design, they are no
2 longer considered mitigation measures under CEQA. If they eliminate or reduce a
3 potentially significant impact to a level below the significance criteria, they eliminate the
4 potential for that significant impact since the "measure" is now a component of the
5 action. Such measures incorporated into the project design have the same status as
6 any "applicant proposed measures." The practice of the California State Lands
7 Commission is to include all measures to eliminate or reduce the environmental impacts
8 of a proposed Project, whether applicant-proposed or recommended mitigation in the
9 Mitigation Monitoring Program or as lease conditions.

10 **IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVES**

11 Section 3.0, Alternatives and Cumulative Projects, identifies alternatives to the
12 proposed Project. Each issue area in Section 4 presents the impact analysis for each
13 alternative scenario. The Executive Summary outlines the collective impacts of each
14 alternative in comparison with the impacts of the proposed Project.

15 **CUMULATIVE PROJECTS IMPACT ANALYSIS**

16 Each issue area in Section 4 presents the cumulative impact scenario, which identifies
17 the potential impacts of the Project that might not be significant when considered alone,
18 but that might contribute to a significant impact in conjunction with the other projects.
19 The list and description of cumulative projects is included in Section 3.0, Alternatives
20 and Cumulative Projects.